

## Rural Utilities Service, USDA

## § 1739.17

(9) Certification that grant funds will not be used to duplicate lines, facilities, or systems providing Broadband Transmission Service.

(10) Federal Obligation Certification on Delinquent Debt.

### § 1739.16 Review of grant applications.

(a) All applications for grants must be delivered to the Agency at the address and by the date specified in the NOFA (see § 1739.2) to be eligible for funding. The Agency will review each application for conformance with the provisions of this part. The Agency may contact the applicant for additional information or clarification.

(b) Incomplete applications as of the deadline for submission will not be considered. If an application is determined to be incomplete, the applicant will be notified in writing and the application will be returned with no further action.

(c) Applications conforming with this part will then be evaluated competitively by a panel of the Agency's employees selected by the Administrator of the Agency, and will be awarded points as described in the scoring criteria in § 1739.17. Applications will be ranked and grants awarded in rank order until all grant funds are expended.

(d) Regardless of the score an application receives, if the Agency determines that the Project is technically or financially infeasible, the Agency will notify the applicant, in writing, and the application will be returned with no further action.

### § 1739.17 Scoring of applications.

(a) All eligible applications will receive points for the following scoring criteria:

(1) The rurality of the Project (up to 40 points);

(2) The economic need of the Project's Service Area (up to 30 points); and

(3) The "community-oriented connectivity" benefits derived from the proposed service (up to 30 points).

(b) Scoring criteria:

(1) *The rurality of the project*—up to 40 points.

(i) This criterion will be used to evaluate the rurality of the Commu-

nity served by the Project, in accordance with the following method of scoring. If a Community is identified in the latest decennial Census, the applicant must use the Census information. If a Community is not identified in the Census but is identified in the latest edition of the Rand McNally Atlas, the applicant will use the Rand McNally Atlas information. Rurality shall be determined by the following criteria:

(A) The 2000 population data contained in the U.S. Bureau of the Census at <http://factfinder.census.gov>: or

(B) The population data contained in the latest edition of the Rand McNally Atlas. If no population data is contained in the Rand McNally Atlas for a community that is recognized in the Atlas, then that community is not eligible for a grant.

(ii) The following categories are used in the evaluation of rurality:

(A) Level 1 means any Community having a population of less than 500 inhabitants.

(B) Level 2 means any Community having a population of at least 500 and not in excess of 1,000 inhabitants.

(C) Level 3 means any Community having a population over 1,000 and not in excess of 2,000 inhabitants.

(D) Level 4 means any Community having a population over 2,000 and not in excess of 3,000 inhabitants.

(E) Level 5 means any Community having a population over 3,000 and not in excess of 4,000 inhabitants.

(F) Level 6 means any Community having a population over 4,000 and not in excess of 5,000 inhabitants.

(G) Level 7 means any Community having a population over 5,000 and not in excess of 10,000 inhabitants.

(H) Level 8 means any Community having a population over 10,000 and not in excess of 20,000 inhabitants.

(iii) Each application will receive points based on the location of the facilities financed using the definitions in paragraphs (b)(1)(i) and (b)(1)(ii) of this section.

(A) For a Service Area that includes a Level 1 Community, it will receive 40 points.

(B) For a Service Area that includes a Level 2 Community, it will receive 35 points.